

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action of July 12, 2001, claims 10-15 were allowed and claims 6 and 21 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1, 7-8 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and claims 2-5 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Those rejections are respectfully traversed.

First of all, the Specification was objected to because of certain inconsistency in terminology. First, the reference numeral "48" was used to refer to both "an undulated spring" and "a first receptacle". The specification and drawings have been amended herein to use the numeral "49" in reference to the first receptacle. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for pointing out this inconsistency.

Second, the Specification was objected to for the use of the phrase "window 44" (page 10, line 11) and "receptacle 44" (page 10, line 14). This is not an inconsistency, and no changes have been made. If the Examiner will look on page 10, line 11, it states that in the embodiment of Figures 6-8, window 44 "becomes a second receptacle". Therefore, calling that component either a window or a receptacle is not inconsistent with this specific explanation.

Claims 1, 7-8 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Martellotti 4,971,575; and claims 2-5 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Martellotti in view of Perino et al 6,234,820. Those rejections are respectfully traversed.

Specifically, each of independent claims 1, 10 and 16 herein calls for the flexible circuit to be wrapped about the edge of the male body member. Claims 1 and 10 call for the adapter to include a second receptacle for receiving the second conductors to engage the first conductors of the flexible circuit at the edge of the male body member. Claim 16 calls for the female connecting device to have means for positioning the second conductors in engagement with the first conductors of the flexible circuit at the edge of the male body member. This structural combination has significant advantages such as reducing the height profile of the connector assembly, because the conductors of the circuit are not engaged at the sides or top and bottom of the male body member. In addition, significant contact forces can be applied at the edge of the male body member in a direction generally parallel to the insertion direction of the male body member into the adapter or the female connecting device. This disclosed and claimed

invention is not shown in nor remotely suggested by Martellotti taken individually under 35 U.S.C. §102 or in combination with Perino under 35 U.S.C. §103.

In essence, all of the claims are being rejected because of the Martellotti reference, Perino being cited solely for showing a resilient strip. Attached hereto as Exhibit "A" is a copy of the front page of Martellotti. Undersigned counsel has colored in "red" the area "at the edge" of either of the male body members of the connector assembly. It can be seen that there are no second conductors whatsoever engaged with the circuit wrapped around those edges. In fact, it would be absolutely impossible to engage the conductors of the flexible circuit at the edges, because the housing is completely closed in those areas. Therefore, Martellotti does not even remotely suggest Applicants' disclosed and claimed invention herein.

Martellotti is specifically designed for engaging the conductors at the sides of the male body members and not at the edges thereof. The Examiner's attention is called to column 3, beginning at line 64, wherein Martellotti specifically describes the resilient legs 18A-18D. He specifically states that "a resilient urging of the engaged legs 18B,18C toward one another to enhance the electrical connection of the respective conductors carried by the support members." In other words, Martellotti specifically designs his connector assembly to have resiliency at the sides of the support members where the conductors engage. There is no teaching or even a remote suggestion that the conductors are to be engaged at the edges of the support members. In fact, as stated above, with the housing being closed at the edges of the support members, no engagement of the conductors at the edges is even possible. The Examiner should note the tall height profile of the Martellotti connector assembly with the short height profile of Applicants' connector assembly.

Each of independent claims 1, 10 and 16 herein call for the conductors to be engageable "at the edge" of the male body member, and the Examiner appears to simply ignore this specific language. There should be no question whatsoever that the phrase "at the edge" is clear, concise and definitive. Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, Deluxe Second Edition, defines "edge" to be a sharp border or thin side of an instrument, such as a razor or knife. Therefore, any person, much less a person skilled in the art, knows precisely what the language "at the edge" in claims 1, 10 and 16 are intended to define. Comparing the support members of Martellotti, to a razor or knife (or Applicants' male body member), it is quite clear that the

conductors of Martellotti are engaged at the sides of the support members and not at the edges thereof.

The rewriting of allowable dependent claims 6 and 11 is being deferred pending the allowance of the claims from which they depend.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of application, allowance of claims 1-5, 7-9, 16-20 and 22-24, along with previously allowed or allowable claims 6, 10-15 and 21, are respectfully traversed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 28, 2001

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Version of Amended Specification Showing the Changes Made

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The subassembly of first male body member 24 and first flexible circuit 16 is inserted into a first receptacle [48] 49 in adapter 36 in the direction of arrow "A" (Fig. 2). As the subassembly is inserted, chamfered edges 28b of flexible latch arms 28 engage the sides of the receptacle to bias the latch arms inwardly in the direction of arrows "B". When the subassembly is fully inserted as shown in Figure 3, latch hooks 28a resiliently snap back outwardly through side windows 42 into engagement with the back side of front flange 38.